Raising the Volume
Episode XXXII

Michael Moore and Michael Allen discuss Reconstruction and the legacy of local hero, Robert Smalls.

Middle School and Up
Mastery of core subjects and twenty-first century themes is essential for all students in the twenty-first century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history and government, and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

**Global Awareness**
1. Use twenty-first century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

**Civic Literacy**
1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

**Work Creatively with Others**
1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work; understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.
Everyone has a story. It’s our place to take a moment to listen. Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else’s shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

“Raising the Volume” is a series of Black stories. Stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. Stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard Center’s Artists-in-Residence, Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, “Raising the Volume” gives a platform to Black community members and opens us all up to honest discussion.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, “To break down racial barriers, start where you are.” Let’s start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode XXXII, please email Kailey Jones at kjones@gaillardcenter.org. Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode XXXII.
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(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XXXII)
Michael Moore, local Charleston politician and great-great-grandson of Robert Smalls, and Michael Allen, an instrumental force in the opening of the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park in Beaufort, South Carolina, discuss the suppressed history of Reconstruction and the legacy of Robert Smalls.

In his opening remarks, Allen states:

“To understand Reconstruction, and to put it into context historically, culturally, and from a modern perspective, I first have to be able to say the word ‘Reconstruction.’ And you may say, ‘Now why would I put it in that type of context?’ Because today, unfortunately, as well as right after Reconstruction, there was a movement to erase it; to not say that it occurred, that it happened, that it was a valid part of our American experience and for some: it was an uplifting part of our American experience.”

Reconstruction refers to the period in our history after the Civil War when America was attempting to “reconstruct” the Constitution, following the abolition of slavery with the inclusion and consideration of free Black Americans. Based on your knowledge of Reconstruction, can you think of a few reasons why some Americans would want to suppress information on this period of history? How do you think they would go about withholding this history from the American people? Research this topic and list two new facts in your notebook that you learned from your search.

Posed with how Moore thinks that we can best combat the silencing of Reconstruction and also support the inclusion of all histories, he detailed the importance of remaining aware of those individuals in the community who care deeply about history, staying intentional regarding the information that you surround yourself with, and doing your own part in preserving and protecting jeopardized stories. He later went on to discuss the bias of varying lenses on history, stating, “As I got older, [I] came to learn that history is much more complicated than what actually happened; it’s who has the power to tell the stories.” Unpack this statement.

As the interview panel came to a close, Moore and Allen took audience questions and brought attention to the achievements and suppressed history of Robert Smalls as well as their thoughts on the Charleston Gaillard Center produced work, Finding Freedom: The Journey of Robert Smalls. The men highlighted the beauty of humanizing and breathing life into historical figures as people, specifically the Smalls’ family in Finding Freedom: The Journey of Robert Smalls, as doing this aids in communicating the strength, power, and struggle of history.

Think of Robert Smalls and his accomplishments, starting with his decision to commandeer the CSS Planter on May 13, 1862. If he had not made the decision to commandeer the CSS Planter and gone forward to fight as a Naval Captain for the Union Army, how could the outcome of the Civil War have been different? Do you think that the Union Army would have won without the contributions of Smalls and his crew?

Click here to visit our website for more information on Finding Freedom: The Journey of Robert Smalls.

Image courtesy of https://blog.leeandlow.com/2013/02/06/black-history-month-why-remember-robert-smalls/

Michael Allen has been a community activist for most of his professional life. He has a deep-seeded interest in our nation’s spiritual growth as it relates to our history and culture. He played a major role in the National Park Service Gullah Geechee Special Resource Study, which examined the feasibility and suitability of establishing educational centers and determining ways to increase interpretation and preservation of this valuable culture. The study began in 2000, and the final report was presented to Congress in 2005. Due to the efforts of Allen and Congressman James E. Clyburn, the United States Congress passed the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Act, which established the first and only African American National Heritage Area in the country in 2006. In 2007, Allen was instrumental in the establishment of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission, which included twenty-five grassroots members from all four states of the corridor. Allen’s primary responsibility was to ensure that this new National Heritage Area became a reality in an effort to provide hope, opportunity, and support to grassroot organizations and the wider Gullah Geechee Community. In 2009, he was formally elevated to the director’s position for the corridor and developed a management plan to guide the operations of the corridor for the future. In 2014, Allen was assigned by the National Park Service to participate as a lead team member on the NPS Special Resource Landmark Study exploring the history and legacy of the Reconstruction Era in American history. Because of this groundbreaking effort, a new National Park Service site, the Reconstruction Era National Monument, was established by presidential proclamation on January 12, 2017. Throughout his career, Allen has been involved in designing exhibits and presenting interpretive programs that involve local communities and history. These programs were designed to attract nontraditional audiences to the National Park Service and other historic sites. In 1999, he was instrumental in erecting the “African Importation Historic Marker” on Sullivan’s Island. In 2008, he assisted the Toni Morrison Society and the College of Charleston in erecting a “Bench by the Road” commemorative bench at Fort Moultrie to memorialize the island’s participation in the African slave trade. Finally, in 2009, he helped in unveiling “African Passages,” an exhibit that highlights the African arrival, presence, and contributions to Gullah Geechee culture and American society. The exhibit looks through the eyes of Africans and African Americans who passed through Sullivan’s Island on their way to be enslaved in Charleston and beyond.
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ABOUT MICHAEL MOORE

Michael Boulware Moore is a high-impact business leader, keynote speaker, board member, and author. He is an innovative thought leader on diversity and inclusion, African American history, social justice, and brand strategy. He earned a BA from Syracuse University and an MBA from Duke University. Moore is currently a candidate for the United States House of Representatives to serve in the 1st South Carolina congressional district. He was the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer at Blackbaud - the world’s leading software company powering the social good community - where he is building and leading the function globally. Previously, Moore was the Founding President/CEO of the International African American Museum. IAAM is a leading institution elevating the history and contributions of those who were brought enslaved to America. Moore was also CEO of Glory Foods and was the long-time principal of a boutique brand strategy consulting firm. He has classical consumer packaged goods brand management experience early in his career at Kraft and Coca-Cola. He was named to Charleston Business Magazine’s “50 Most Influential” list. He received an honorary doctorate in Public History from Dickinson College. In July 2019, the City of Charleston honored him with “Michael Boulware Moore Day.” Moore chairs the Board of Trustees at St. Mark’s School in Southborough, Massachusetts, where he received a Distinguished Alumni Award. He has served on a number of nonprofit boards, including the National Park Foundation and Penn Center. Moore is a frequent keynote speaker. Over the years, he has addressed groups up to 20,000 at conferences, universities, schools, museums, and other organizations. He often speaks about the connectivity between the past and the present and on the role that history plays in framing and guiding the present. He also powerfully shares the story of his great great grandfather, Civil War hero and Reconstruction Congressman Robert Smalls. Moore is a valued media contributor having been featured on CNN, The Washington Post, ESPN, PBS, MSNBC, NBC, CBS, C-SPAN, BBC, The New York Times, The Economist, USA Today, Forbes, Huffington Post, etc. Moore is the author of Bridging the Gaps: The Love of Marketing and the forthcoming illustrated children’s book Freedom on the Sea about Robert Smalls.¹

BIBLIOGRAPHY


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